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EGBERT LAW OFFICES
412 MAIN STREET, 7TH FLOOR
HOUSTON TX 77002

In re Application of	:	DECISION ON
LECOMTE et al	:	
PCT No.: PCT/FR04/050157	:	
Application No.: 10/552,751	:	
Int. Filing Date: 13 April 2004	:	PETITION UNDER
Priority Date: 11 April 2003	:	
Attorney's Docket No.: 1429-169	:	
For: MOBILE DEVICE FOR... APPLIANCE	:	37 CFR 1.47(a)

This is in response to the "PETITION TO PROCEED UNDER 35 U.S.C. §116 AND 37 C.R.F. §1.47(a)" filed on 07 August 2006. The \$200.00 petition fee has been paid by check.

BACKGROUND

On 13 April 2004, applicants filed international application PCT/FR04/050157, which claimed priority to an earlier application filed 11 April 2003. The thirty (30) month time period for paying the basic national fee in the United States of America expired at midnight on 11 October 2005.

On 11 October 2005, applicants filed a Transmittal Letter for entry into the national stage in the United States of America. Filed with the Transmittal Letter was, inter alia, the requisite basic national fee. No executed oath or declaration from the inventors accompanied the Transmittal Letter. A copy of the intentional application was transmitted on 30 June 2005 to the USPTO from the International Bureau.

On 09 June 2006, the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) mailed a "NOTIFICATION OF MISSING REQUIREMENTS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371 IN THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)" (Form PCT/DO/EO/905) which informed applicant, inter alia, that an "Oath or Declaration of the inventors, in compliance with 37 CFR 1.497(a), and (b), identifying the application by International application number and international filing date" must be submitted within two months from its mailing date or by 32 months from the priority date, whichever is later, in order to avoid abandonment of the national stage application.

On 07 August 2006, petitioner filed the present petition accompanied, inter alia, an executed Declaration without the signature of one of the two inventors, i.e., without the signature of Michel LECOMTE.

DISCUSSION

Petitioner's petition under 37 CFR 1.47(b) is improper because this petition is for the circumstance when all of the inventors refuse to execute an application for patent, or cannot be found or reached after diligent effort. In this situation two of the four inventors signed the declaration. Accordingly, the petition has been treated under 37 CFR 1.47(a).

§ 1.47 Filing when an inventor refuses to sign or cannot be reached.

(a) If a joint inventor refuses to join in an application for patent or cannot be found or reached after diligent effort, the application may be made by the other inventor on behalf of himself or herself and the nonsigning inventor. The oath or declaration in such an application must be accompanied by a petition including proof of the pertinent facts, the fee set forth in § 1.17(h), and the last known address of the nonsigning inventor. The nonsigning inventor may subsequently join in the application by filing an oath or declaration complying with § 1.63.

A petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) must be accompanied by (1) the fee under 37 CFR 1.17(h), (2) factual proof that the missing joint inventor refuses to execute the application or cannot be reached after diligent effort, (3) a statement of the last known address of the missing inventor, and (4) an oath or declaration by each 37 CFR 1.47(a) applicant on his or her own behalf and on behalf of the non-signing joint inventor.

Furthermore, section 409.03(d) of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (M.P.E.P.) **Proof of Unavailability or Refusal**, the relevant sections states, in part:

REFUSAL TO JOIN:

A refusal by an inventor to sign an oath or declaration when the inventor has not been presented with the application papers does not itself suggest that the inventor is refusing to join the application unless it is clear that the inventor understands exactly what he or she is being asked to sign and refuses to accept the application papers. A copy of the application papers should be sent to the last known address of the nonsigning inventor, or, if the nonsigning inventor is represented by counsel, to the address of the nonsigning inventor's attorney. The fact that an application may contain proprietary information does not relieve the 37 CFR 1.47 applicant of the responsibility to present the application papers to the inventor if the inventor is willing to receive the papers in order to sign the oath or declaration. It is noted that the inventor may obtain a complete copy of the application, unless the inventor has assigned his or her interest in the application, and the assignee has requested that the inventor not be permitted access. See MPEP § 106. It is reasonable to require that the inventor be presented with the application papers before a petition under 37 CFR 1.47 is granted since such a procedure ensures that the inventor is apprised of the application to which the oath or declaration is directed. *In re Gray*, 115 USPQ 80 (Comm'r Pat. 1956).

Where a refusal of the inventor to sign the application papers is alleged, the circumstances of the presentation of the application papers and of the refusal must be specified in a statement of facts by the person who presented the inventor with the application papers and/or to whom the refusal was made. Statements by a party not present when an oral refusal is made will not be accepted.

Proof that a *bona fide* attempt was made to present a copy of the application papers (specification, including claims, drawings, and oath or declaration) to the nonsigning inventor for signature, but the inventor refused to accept delivery of the papers or expressly stated that the application papers should not be sent, may be sufficient. When there is an express oral refusal, that fact along with the time and place of the refusal must be stated in the statement of facts. When there is an express written refusal, a copy of the document evidencing that refusal must be made part of the statement of facts. The document may be redacted to remove material not related to the inventor's reasons for refusal.

When it is concluded by the **37 CFR 1.47** applicant that a nonsigning inventor's conduct constitutes a refusal, all facts upon which that conclusion is based should be stated in the statement of facts in support of the petition or directly in the petition. If there is documentary evidence to support facts alleged in the petition or in any statement of facts, such evidence should be submitted. Whenever a nonsigning inventor gives a reason for refusing to sign the application oath or declaration, that reason should be stated in the petition.

Petitioner has satisfied items (1) and (3) – (4) of 37 CFR 1.47(a). However, item (2) has not been satisfied.

Regarding item 2, Mr. Egbert alleges in that numerous attempts were made to obtain the signature of Mr. LECOMTE as evidenced by the four certified letters mailed to him in August and September. However, a review of the translated letters do not sufficiently demonstrated that a copy of the application papers were presented to the nonsigning inventor, Mr. LECOMTE. It is unclear what documents were forwarded to Mr. LECOMTE because there is no specific statement referring to a copy of the application papers (specification, including claims, drawings, and oath or declaration) as required under MPEP. 409.03(d) being sent to him for review and signature.

In addition, it is unclear if Mr. Egbert has first hand knowledge of the mailings to the nonsigning inventor, if he doesn't then petitioner needs to submit statements, with specific facts on the actions referred to the mailing of the documents to the nonsigning inventor by persons who have first-hand knowledge of such facts.

The current record does not sufficiently establish Michael LECOMTE refusal to join in the patent application because no evidentiary documents have been submitted to show that a *bona fide* attempt was made to deliver the complete application to him and that he refused to sign the required papers.

Consequently, the petition has not met the items under 37 CFR 1.47(a).

CONCLUSION

The petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) is **DISMISSED** without prejudice.

If reconsideration of the merits of the petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) is desired, applicant must file a request for reconsideration within **TWO (2) MONTHS** from the mail date of this Decision. Any reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition Under 37 CFR 1.47(a)." Extensions of time are available under 37 CFR 1.136(a). Failure to timely file the proper response will result in ABANDONMENT.

Any further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed to the Mail Stop PCT, Commissioner for Patents, Office of PCT Legal Administration, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, with the contents of the letter marked to the attention of the Office of PCT Legal Administration.



Rafael Bacares

PCT Legal Examiner

PCT Legal Office

Telephone: (571) 272-3276

Facsimile: (571) 272-0459